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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000290

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/24/2019  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKEY AGREES, WITH LIMITS, TO ALLOW WITHDRAWAL OF  
MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM IRAQ USING TURKISH PORTS

Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor A. F. Godfrey,  
for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The MFA informed us on February 20 that Turkey will agree to modify the existing the Memorandum of Understanding so that the U.S. may transport weapons and weapons systems, including ammunition, from Iraq via the Habur Gate border crossing and overland by road to the Turkish port of Agalar for onward shipment. The GOT said they could not agree, for security reasons, to a request to include the Aegean port of Izmir or to expand the number of ports available for this activity. Per the October 2006 Retrograde MOU, the primary port authorized for retrograde will likely remain Iskendrun, with Mersin as back-up. Agalar, a small NATO facility just west of Mersin, will be the only port facility to be made available for the transshipment of ammunition. End summary.

¶2. (C) MFA presented a nonpaper (text para 5) containing what it said were preliminary views of an interagency committee considering U.S. requests for amendments to the 2006 Retrograde MOU made by the Office of Defense Cooperation-Turkey (ODC) in April 2008. While agreeing to permit shipments of weapons and ammunition over Turkish roads for the first time, the paper notes a number of new requirements for providing information on the content of the shipments, personnel and vehicles involved, 30-day advance notice, and tight restrictions on the route and timing of the shipments so that they are completed during daylight hours to the extent possible.

¶3. (C) MFA has proposed to meet with Embassy, ODC, and Turkish General Staff (TGS) the week of March 2 get comments on the proposed modifications and work toward finalizing the new rules and principles for retrograde.

¶4. (C) Comment: The interagency deliberations on our requests to ship weapons and use the port of Izmir took almost nine months. Although MFA describes the decisions as "preliminary," we think it is unlikely we will get them to change their view on Izmir. Izmir as a destination adds approximately 550 road miles to the route and would bring shipments in the vicinity of some of Turkey's most popular tourist destinations. TGS has the most significant voice and final say in the process, and has certainly already weighed in.

¶5. (SBU) Begin text of MFA nonpaper.

Preliminary views of Turkey concerning the amendment request of the U.S. for the "Rules and Principles to be Applied to

the Retrograde of Supplies and Equipment from Iraq Using Turkish Roadways and Sea Ports":

¶1. The proposed amendment of the article 5 of the "Rules and Principles" that changes the primary port and alternate ports for the "Retrograde" could not been accepted due to security reasons.

¶2. On the other hand, after careful evaluation, it has been concluded that the first sentence of the article six of the "Rules and Principles" which prohibits the transportation of weapons and ammunition and weapons systems could be amended, while keeping the restriction on combatant personnel, on the following conditions:

a) Number of vehicles which would take part in each and every transport shall be determined separately by taking into account of the type of weapons, ammunitions and weapons systems to be carried, in order to ensure traffic, environment and public safety.

b) Detailed information as to:

-- type and quantity of weapons, ammunitions and weapon systems,

-- the personnel who will take part in the activities, together with the plate numbers of the vehicles, identity information of drivers, passport numbers, contact information of designated person for each convoy,

-- the transport route and the final destination shall be provided to the Turkish General Staff and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for approval at

least 30 days in advance.

c) It shall be ensured that the vehicles which carry these kind of cargo shall be at the Habur Gate at 06.00 a.m. at the day of the transport for completion of transit cargo procedures and that the convoy shall reach at its designated arrival port as soon as possible. It shall also be ensured that the cargo shall be loaded upon arrival at the designated port at the latest in 24 hours time.

d) There shall not be more than one transport of that kind of cargo at a given time.

e) Tasucu/Agalar Sea Port shall be the only designated port for ammunition.

t) The Government of Turkey shall reserve the right to decline to give authorization for such transportation if it deems necessary.

¶3. In order to finalize our evaluation and to ensure the security of the operation following information is required:

-- Total size and type of weapons, ammunition and weapons systems that are envisaged to be transported through Turkey;

-- Approximate average number of vehicles to be used in each convoy.

¶4. As there would be transportation of weapons/weapons systems and ammunition, we will make following minor amendment in article 3 of the "Rules and Principles".

Article 3: Activities to be carried out for the purpose of the said transit transport and their results shall not create any financial burden or damage for the Republic of Turkey. Any financial consequences or claims arising out of activities and acts or omissions which may be committed during such activities shall be fully and an immediately borne and compensated by the

Government of the USA. The Turkish law shall be applied and the courts of the Republic of Turkey shall be competent for such claims.

15. We propose to hold a meeting with participation from the MFA, TGS, US Embassy and the ODC in coming days.

END NONPAPER TEXT.

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Silliman